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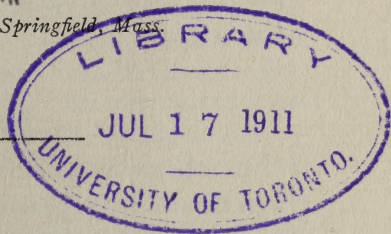


Teaching Peace in the Schools
Through Instruction in
American History

BY

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OF THE
AMERICAN SCHOOL PEACE LEAGUE

To promote, through the schools and the educational public of America, the interests of international justice and fraternity.

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All teachers in the schools of the country, persons otherwise enlisted in the general work of education, and students in high schools, academies, normal schools, and colleges shall be eligible to membership in the League; such persons may become members by signifying their devotion to the purpose of the League.

Any person who pays annually five dollars shall be called a sustaining member; and any person who pays twenty-five dollars or more annually shall be called a patron.

Teaching Peace in the Schools Through Instruction in American History

To the observer of important world movements to-day, two antagonistic groups of phenomena present themselves. One has to do with the interests of international peace and good-will; the other with the stupendous preparations for war. Such highly civilized countries as England and Germany for example, are imposing overwhelming financial burdens upon themselves in order to build up their armies and navies. To such an extent have jealousy, fear, and suspicion seized them that in wild panic they rush to build Dreadnoughts and otherwise increase their fighting strength. The claim is that great armaments are absolutely necessary for the preservation of peace, although it is plain that such preparation invites national bankruptcy. On the other hand, such organizations as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, The Hague Conferences, and the five hundred peace societies of the world are moulding public opinion in favor of a new international spirit.

Out of this strange situation good is certain to come, for while it is scarcely probable that war between two such great countries as Germany and England will occur, the actual conditions are causing the people to reflect upon the folly of spending untold millions on their armies and navies, and are forcing men to think as they have never thought before about the barbarous method of settling international disputes by the use of brute force. Ideas are growing into ideals and convictions, and these in turn are rapidly finding embodiment in organized action. Important among the organized forces is the American School Peace League, which "aims to secure

the co-operation of the educational public of America in the project for promoting international justice and equity.”

As school superintendents we can do much to further the work of developing a peace loving spirit among school children, and to this end no branch of instruction lends itself so well as does American history. For the United States stands for the grandest experiment in the development of Christian democracy. In teaching history, therefore, too much emphasis has been placed upon wars. Of course they should receive attention for they have played an important part in racial and national evolutions. But the significant things about them — and the only things that should properly have any consideration in the school — are their causes, their results, and the spirit and method in which they were carried on.

For example, slavery was without doubt the underlying cause of the Civil War. Geographic and economic conditions should, therefore, be discussed to explain why slavery flourished in the South and not in the North. Then the relation of slavery to state rights and secession should be made plain. It should be understood that Lincoln's great purpose was to save the Union and not to destroy slavery. He saw clearly that secession, carried to an extreme, would result in as many weak, petty countries as there were states federated together in a mighty political family. The federation of states foreshadowed then as it does now the federated nations of the world; our national congress the congress of the world; and our supreme court the permanent international tribunal. These great embodiments of the co-operative spirit in political life have been of the highest value to our own country and have reacted powerfully upon the international sentiment of the world. In laying emphasis, therefore, upon these facts, the school can do much for the cause of international peace.

Only a limited amount of attention should be concentrated upon campaigns and battles. We are not preparing pupils for

military life, but for useful citizenship in an orderly community.

Much should be made of the destructive effects of war. It disorganizes industry, raises the cost of living, and causes an awful waste of material wealth and human life. Said General Sherman in a report of his Georgia campaign, "I estimate the damage done to the state of Georgia and its military resources at \$100,000,000, at least \$20,000,000 of which has inured to our advantage, and the remainder is simple waste and destruction." Well did he afterwards declare, "War is hell!"

Nor have we yet finished paying for that war. Our pensions have in the past ten years cost an average of more than \$140,000,000 annually. In 1908 our taxation for pensions was nearly \$154,000,000, while in the same year we paid for the maintenance of the army \$111,000,000, and for the navy, \$119,000,000, a grand total of \$383,000,000 credited to the army and navy account. Nearly two-thirds of our entire revenue are expended upon wars past and anticipated. Moreover, this material loss suggests untold suffering which we must take into account in any attempt to measure the disastrous effects of war. For instance, if we count those who were slain on the battlefield in the Civil War, and those who died from wounds, disease and hardship in wretched prisons, the loss of men — many of them the flower of the nation's young manhood — was equal to seven hundred a day during the four long years of the war. This wholesale destruction of the moral wealth of the country cannot be estimated. Emphasis upon such facts by the teacher of American history will make them eloquent arguments in favor of peace.

When we learn to keep in mind the right perspective in teaching the national biography of such a peace-loving people as we have been from the beginning of our history, we shall devote to the arts of peace and to the social and industrial conditions of life that large measure of attention which is

their due. In so doing, we shall also bring out the fact that our history is a part of world history and that we have a racial inheritance to which people of various lands and ages have made invaluable contributions. We shall make it clear that for much that we hold dear in our civilization to-day, we are indebted to the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Romans, and to various countries of Mediæval and Modern Europe. We have not lived in isolation; no country ever can. In all phases of our history, our national life has been closely related with the life of European countries and with the rest of the world. And this is as it should be, for no nation can render its appropriate service to humanity except by harmoniously co-operating with other nations, — a fact which was never so self-evident as in this age of steam and electricity.

One reason, doubtless, why so much stress has been laid upon wars is that the heroic element is called into action on the battlefield. There is often a picturesque and colorful quality in the subject matter that strongly appeals to boys and girls. This heroic quality as exhibited in campaigns and battles is worthy of emphasis. But heroism is quite as vividly illustrated by men of peace in the performance of social duties. Even if we devote less of the time and strength of the school to the destructive forces of war, and more to the constructive arts of peace, we shall find that there is no history more fascinating or more dramatic for the American boy and girl than our own. To illustrate my meaning, let me mention only a few facts which suggest the character of the peaceful evolution of American institutions. In the settlement of America, European life entered the new world, received large modifications from physical influences and then reacted upon the social and political life of the old world. When the settler reached America, he was European in dress, tools, habits of thought, and ways of doing things. But these he rapidly changed in adapting himself to the trying conditions of pioneer life. In

the beginning, therefore, the wilderness mastered the man; but in the end the man mastered the wilderness and brought under his control a continent. The result was a new type, the American. This process of Americanization evolved many dramatic incidents and many heroic deeds.

Now it so happened that the early colonists were largely Anglo-Saxons, having the Anglo-Saxon spirit or impulse with its love of fair play and its keen sense of individual freedom. The political ideas and ideals which these colonists planted here were rapidly modified under the democratizing influence of frontier surroundings; and the Anglo-Saxon spirit, represented by the early New England settlers, has largely dominated American thought and purpose from 1620 down to the present time. In other words, the Anglo-Saxon spirit on the one hand, and the movement westward with its constant touch with pioneer conditions on the other, largely explain the American type in its special development.

In the great movement from the Atlantic to the Pacific, there has been a continual advance of the frontier, and in every area of this advance a return to primitive conditions and also a new social development. In this development — which has been much accelerated because it has taken place for the most part in times of peace — the five phases of institutional life as represented by the family, the church, the school, the state, and industry, are well illustrated. Each of these should receive its due share of attention. Hitherto we have over-emphasized political history, although the state is the most complex of all the great institutions. In this over-emphasis of the political side of life, we have tried to teach what the pupil is not ready to understand and failed to give proper consideration of things which he can understand and which are more important for him to know.

These things, it should be emphatically noted, have to do with the constructive arts of peace. In a very elementary way, for

example, it can be shown how the simple old-time school in the rude log hut has become the complex educational system of to-day, and how the hand industry of the early colonial times has grown into the factory system of our modern city.

In dealing with the industries, the inter-dependence of men and of communities should be demonstrated and the need of co-operation between various countries in the interests of the well-being of all should be strongly set forth. In primitive industry the individual worked alone; in modern industry he combines his work with others. In a very emphatic way the modern factory system illustrates the spirit of co-operation. Co-operation and not competition has been the law of material growth and prosperity.

The westward movement has been closely identified with the great tide of European immigration into this country. In sending their thousands and hundred thousands, many countries have contributed their thought and their ideals and all have been helpful. We are a cosmopolitan people, and we owe much of what we are to what the immigrants, first and last, have brought from their various European homes.

In connecting our national life with the life and work of the world, we shall fail of our duty to the young if we do not show clearly the frank and straightforward character of American diplomacy. We have been honest in our diplomatic methods; we have been sincere in our diplomatic relations. Moreover, in impressing the great ideal of peace and good-will to men of all classes and countries, we need to inspire our pupils with the thought that nations cannot truly and nobly live without a due consideration for other nations. It has been well said that our supreme business as a people is not the frightening of rivals but the making of friends. To put this ideal into practice, we must live up to the motto that justice and righteousness are the keystone of national greatness. Thus shall we meet the moral responsibility that is ours, and in a very real sense occupy as a people a position of leadership among the nations of the earth.

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